

Monuments and Ceremonies Commission Meeting

Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Chairman, Phil Kraft called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM with the following members present: Marian Castell, David Polett, Karen Polett, Ken Reiss, and Charles Scribner.

Minutes of the December 14, 2010 meeting were approved as read on a motion by Ken Reiss, second David Polett.

New Business: Phil distributed a draft of a letter he will send to Memorial Day Parade participants inviting them to our February 8, Monuments and Ceremonies meeting to solicit support in mustering the Parade in a more organized fashion. Changes to the letter were suggested and the final version will be mailed. Additions and corrections of the contact people for individual organizations were also made.

Dave Polett noted that he had discussed the Marine Memorial service at the Darien Boat Club with Jim Baker and that Jim and the Darien Boat Club will take over that ceremony there this year. Previously, this Memorial Ceremony was held at Pear Tree Point Beach after the Spring Grove Veteran's Cemetery ceremony which follows the Memorial Day Parade. Dave will ascertain whether a wreath, and the VFW Color Guard will be needed for this ceremony.

Phil distributed a flyer from the Bantam Band, a group of musicians who play patriotic music at a particular site. Discussion followed about where this group might fit into our Memorial Day observance.

Phil will speak to the new Band leader at DHS, Jonathan Grauer about the Band perhaps joining with the Tudor Singers for some patriotic songs. It was suggested that the Band line up on the left side of the platform so that their instruments do not impede walkers.

We were reminded by Phil that we need to select a Speaker and Grand Marshall for this year's Memorial Day Parade.

It was noted that one of our Commissioners should contact the Darien Police Department and determine when they plan to conduct the re-dedication ceremony for the newly renovated monument in the Spring Grove Veteran's Cemetery. They may want to combine with the Memorial Day Parade and we could then invite members of the Monument sculptor's family to attend and speak.

Debbie Parnon is coordinating the Cub Scouts for the pick-up of the Wreaths Across America wreaths from the cemetery on February 1.

Discussion was held about the Fitch Home Monuments. We agreed that every effort should be made to preserve the three plaques on the granite monument, the small monument in front of the oak tree as well as the tree itself. Ken Reiss mentioned that those monuments are the property of the Town of Darien. We agreed that our Commission needs to work with the Darien Housing Authority and the First Selectman to ensure the preservation of these important historically significant monuments.

Karen and David Polett volunteered to begin taking current photographs of all the monuments in Darien in order to update our Master Inventory Catalog. Karen noted that the Fireman's Monument, the Veteran's Memorial Circle and the 9/11 Monument are not on the current list. These will be included in the new listing along with a brief history/description of each monument.

Old Business: The Tokeneke Bridge plaque is being stored at Ring's End Lumber Yard. Karen reported that it should be covered and protected from the elements and placed in an upright position so the water /snow does not destroy the fragile writing. She has spoken to Dave Campbell about this and he said he would have it covered. Placement of this plaque near the Tokeneke Bridge was discussed.

Charles Scribner asked about whether DHS had returned our Commission's bunting, which they borrowed to use for the Wreaths Across America ceremonies in December. Phil Kraft will check with Donna Russo about the return of the bunting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM on a motion by Marian Castell, second by Charles Scribner.

The next meeting will be held at 3:30 PM on Tuesday, February 8, 2011 in Room 206.

Submitted by,

Karen K. Polett
Secretary